MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Does it mean that he is wrong to the extent of fifty per cent ?

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : I did not say that he was wrong. I only said that fifty per cent was not correct. I agree with him. Some mills are closed due to the non-availability of working capital; some mills are very old that their age is about 120 to 130 years, where we cannot rejuvenate them or modernise them and, therefore, they have to be closed. The Government is also thinking of making them retire under the voluntary retirement scheme. That scheme would be taken up with the Cabinet within another month.

[English]

Credit Facilities to Exporters

*585. *SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :
SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to strengthen the existing infrastructural facilities to exporters such as ports, power, communications transport facilities and concessional export credit required for export promotions;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the steps taken by the Government to remove these infrastructural bottlenecks for export promotion ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

Government is engaged in the continuous upgradation of export infrastructure. The Ministry of Commerce acts in co-ordination with the other Ministries, Departments and agencies for the purpose. Standing Committees on Promotion of Exports (SCOPE) in respect of air cargo (SCOPE-AIR) and sea borne cargo (SCOPE-SHIPPING) are functioning in the Ministry. These help to resolve constraints encountered in export transportation and to advise on long term strengthening of infrastructure. The Ministry of Surface Transport is upgrading the port infrastructure. Inland Container Depots (ICDs) and Container Freight Stations (CFSs) are being established in various parts of the country to facilitate container transportation of goods and intermodal conveyance. An Inter-Ministerial Committee accords single-window clearance for establishing these ICDs and CFSs. An Open Sky Policy has been adopted to permit uninterrupted clearance of air cargo. Private initiative is being harnessed in creating infrastructure at ports, airports, in upgrading highways and in setting up of ICDs/CFSs, warehouses, etc.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) arranges for and monitors the flow of export credit in rupees and in foreign currency. The schemes in force include–

(i) Pre-shipment Export Credit in Foreign Currency (PCFC),

(ii) Pre-shipment Export Credit in Rupees,

(iii) Post-shipment Export Credit in Rupees, and

(iv) Export Bill Rediscounting (EBR).

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Sir, in our country, there is ample availability of mineral deposits and raw materials. We can develop our exports to the highest extent. But it is a pity that we are unable to develop our infrastructure for exports. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what specific steps are taken by the Government of India for the upgradation of port infrastructure. I would particularly like to know how much money the Government is going to spend to develop Paradip, Gopalpur and Vizag ports.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : SNQ No. 3. Shri Ashok Pradhan. The hon. Member is absent.

... *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to raise a very serious issue ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have not received reply to my question ... *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The hon. Member is absent, what can I do ? The Minister cannot reply in the absence of the Member.

... *(Interruptions)*

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Inflation Rate

[English]

*582. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the prices of all the consumer commodities and the rate of inflation have been steadily increasing following the announcement of the General Budget this year ; and

(b) if so, the weekly rate of rise in Consumer price indices and the rate of inflation indicating corresponding figures during the above mentioned period of the years 1994-95 and 1995-96 ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) On the eve of the presentation of the General Budget on 22.7.1996, the annual inflation